

DHHS Today
February 14, 2006



Happy Valentine's Day



**Arkansas Fitness Challenge “Games” Begin!
Thousands to join the 2006 Competition Statewide**



As the Winter Olympics get set to begin in Torino, games of another sort prepared to launch today in Arkansas during which thousands of Arkansans are expected to go for the “gold” in the 2006 Arkansas Fitness Challenge. A ceremonial torch was lit during a media kickoff Friday, February 10 in the State Capitol Rotunda to commemorate the beginning of the employee exercise contest, which begins March 1 and runs through May 31. In addition to the Challenge anchors, Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield (ABCBS) many other companies, organizations and state agencies statewide are joining in the competition and were recognized at the kickoff.

“The 2005 statistics are in the history books and we’re beginning again at the starting line,” said Sharon Allen, president and chief operating officer of Arkansas Blue Cross. “I, Sharon Allen, on behalf of the employees of Arkansas Blue Cross, challenge you, John Selig, and the employees of DHHS to ‘Round 3’ of the Arkansas Fitness Challenge. ... Let the games begin ... again.”

Arkansas Blue Cross and the former Arkansas Department of Health introduced the Arkansas Fitness Challenge in 2004 when employees of the two entities squared off to “get fit.” What’s at stake? Better health. The Challenge encourages employees to work toward the public health recommendation of

adult physical activity 30 minutes each day, most days of the week.

In 2005, the second year for the contest, a total of 2,362 employees from the two anchor entities participated in the competition, engaging in eligible cardiovascular-oriented exercises to work their way through 30 virtual checkpoints in Arkansas – from Bentonville to West Memphis. The winning entity was determined by whose employees had the greatest participation and scored the highest in four categories of measurement. Arkansas Blue Cross employees won the contest in 2004 and 2005. However, the biggest win was in improved employee health and fitness for all employees who participated in the competition.

“The first and second Challenge yielded great results in improved fitness levels for the employees of Arkansas Blue Cross and the Arkansas Department of Health,” said Allen. “Last year, in addition to our two entities, 45 other companies and groups stepped up to the Challenge and got moving. Some groups did internal contests; some found a foe and challenged another company in their community. We estimate that between 10,000 and 12,000 individuals through their groups participated in the 2005 Arkansas Fitness Challenge. That is amazing. This year, many of those same groups and several others are up to the Challenge.”

To help other companies prepare for their own competitions, the *Employee Fitness Contest Kit*, a complete guide to organizing an employee competition, was distributed. The Kit was developed following the 2004 contest and offered free to companies. To date, almost 500 requests for the Kit have been received from large and small companies, banks, schools and universities, physician offices, churches, hospitals and state agencies.

“We believe programs like the Arkansas Fitness Challenge are a fun, motivational way to help people begin to change their lifestyles and, ultimately, improve their health and fitness,” said Selig. “In Arkansas today, approximately 85 percent of our citizens have very little physical activity in their daily lives,” said Selig. “We have roughly more than 65 percent of our citizens considered obese or overweight. We still have a high number of smokers. The costs in treating diseases that result from these health risks, like heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes — preventable diseases — is skyrocketing. We are looking at a serious public health epidemic as overweight baby boomers age and become ill.

“In a post-contest evaluation, 2005 Challenge participants within our two entities told us that their health had somewhat or greatly improved during the contest; that they had increased the number of days they exercised per week; that they had lowered their systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and weight (four reported losing 50+ pounds). Ninety-eight (98) percent said they would participate in future programs like the Challenge. Feedback from our external participants showed that they had experienced similar results in their workplaces,” Selig said.

“We didn’t get here overnight and we don’t presume that things will be “fixed” in a few months,” said Allen. “But the employees of these groups are making a start. This is awesome. It’s what we hoped for. It’s what we need to help Arkansans enjoy a healthier life and move Arkansas from 46th in the nation in poor health to first in the nation for good health.”

Governor Huckabee declared today “Arkansas Fitness Challenge” day in recognition of the contest in a decree that was introduced by Jean-Paul Francoeur, chairman of the Governor’s Council on Fitness.

“The Arkansas Fitness Challenge is one way we are making a commitment to better health, starting at home,” said Selig.

Allen said it is recommended that employees always consult their physician before starting any exercise program. “Our desire is to meet employees right where they are and get them started down the road to better health, better self-esteem and a better life,” she said. “You don’t have to be a fitness fanatic; we just want to make some movement, literally and figuratively, toward better health. We also want to encourage other companies and organizations around the state to organize their own fitness challenges and keep this healthy movement ... moving.”

To receive a free copy of the “Employee Fitness Contest Kit” in notebook and/or CD format, call toll-free: **1-800-686-2609** (Arkansas Blue Cross) or stop by the nearest Arkansas Blue Cross office.

The Kit may be downloaded as PDFs at any one of the following Web sites:

- www.ArkansasBlueCross.com (click on “Employers” tab, then the Kit logo)
- www.HealthAdvantage-hmo.com (click on “Employers” tab, then the Kit logo)

- www.BlueAdvantageArkansas.com (click on “Employers” tab, then the Kit logo)
- www.HealthyArkansas.com (click on the Kit logo)
- www.Arkansas.gov/ha/home.html (click on the Kit logo)

Founded in 1948, Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is the largest health insurer in Arkansas, serving approximately one-third of the fully insured market. Arkansas Blue Cross and its affiliates have more than 2,700 employees. If combined, the 39 independent, locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans collectively provide health-care coverage for 93 million — nearly one in three — Americans.

The Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services plays a key role in protecting and improving the health of all Arkansans. DHHS serves more than one million Arkansans each year. For more information about DHHS services, please visit www.arkansas.gov/dhhs.

A Special Horse for a Special Girl

"Ever since I was little, I've fantasized of having an Arabian horse of my very own. These dreams allowed me to temporarily escape from an abusive family situation. When I was taken away from my family at the age of 5, I hoped that I would be sent to a home that had horses. While being moved from home to home, I kept wishing that someone with horses would adopt me.

I read almost every book the school library had on horses, including my favorite, the Black Stallion series. I got lost in the stories and pictured myself on the Black.

When I was 10, I went to a friend's birthday party, held at a horse stable. After my first real horseback ride, I continuously asked my foster parents to let me take riding lessons. Finally, in my last group home, I was allowed to use my clothing and recreational money for riding lessons. My CASA worker took me every week. On the back of a horse I could forget my troubles and pretend I was riding my own horse.

It seemed I didn't really belong anywhere so I developed a negative self image and a defiant attitude towards authority and adults. However, I found that when I worked around the horses I had time to think and work on my problems.

Not too long after I started my riding lessons, I unwillingly went to a party for foster children. The party had a circus theme with games and crafts. There were four adults manning each booth.

At one particular booth I was asked to pick out a stuffed toy, write down why I picked that particular one and how I would use it in the circus. I dug through about a hundred animals, looking for a horse. When I found one, I took it over to the table and started telling a lady what I would train the horse to do. The lady, her husband, and I ended up talking about horses until it was time to move on to the next booth.

A couple of weeks later I was surprised to learn that the horsey couple I met at the party were interested in adopting me. That's when I found out the party was held to introduce perspective parents to adoptable kids. I visited their Quarter horse ranch several times and I decided that they were the right parents for me. Luckily they felt the same about me!

About six months after I went to live with my mom and dad we moved to Arkansas to help an elderly aunt with her farm. We like Arkansas and decided to make it our permanent home. We live on a dirt road and are surrounded by cattle and chicken farms.

It has taken two years to rebuild and remodel the older buildings. We built a sand based riding arena and round pen. My dad is still working on improvements to the farm, including a better horse barn.

Even though my mom had quarter horses for 40 years she always wanted to raise Arabians. With all the changes that were taking place, and my love for Arabians, it seemed to be the best time to follow our vision. My mom and dad bought a few Arabians for breeding but so far I don't have a horse of my own to show and ride.

Part of my dream has come true! I have a family of my own that supports my desire to have my own Arabian plus I have a place to keep one.

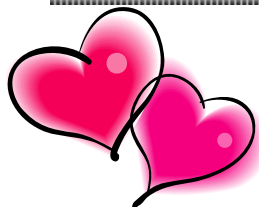
Last spring I started taking riding lessons. Most of my instructor's lessons are with Arabian horses. I went to my instructor because I wanted to learn to show Arabians in halter, western pleasure and hunt seat. Many of our students have won regional or national titles and several are now professional trainers.

I would like to show in western pleasure, and I already have a pretty show outfit! I am learning to ride hunt seat and hope to show in that discipline. Given enough time I would really like to show in the Native Costume classes. I also would take my Arabian trail riding just for fun and relaxation.

This fall, my instructor Sharon allowed me to show one of her purebred Arabians, Sierra. Sharon taught me how to clip, groom and prepare him for the show. I cleaned my good tack and selected the outfit I thought looked best on him. My parents picked up Sierra at the stables and trailored us to the show. I placed in several pleasure and equitation classes. I was very proud to be dressed up and riding a beautiful Arabian.

By going to clinics, meetings, and shows I have met many Arabian owners who have been very helpful and encouraging. These experiences have improved my self image. It's easier now for me to talk to people and I am beginning to overcome my shyness. Being with horses, and those who love them, has changed many of my negative attitudes and given me a new respect for adults and my peers.

An Arabian horse of my own would be my best friend. Someone I could talk to, share my life with and be honored to show.



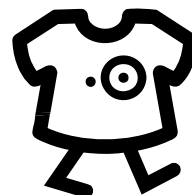
American Heart Walk – April 22, 2006

Department of Health & Human Services Volunteer Activities Council will sponsor the 2006 Heart Walk DHHS Team with a Kick-Off Event during a Brown Bag program on March 3, 2006 in Conference Room A & B in DPS beginning at 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided to the first 60 people. The American Heart Walk is a non-competitive event focusing on exercise as an important component of a heart-healthy lifestyle while raising money to support medical research and educational programs of the American Heart Association. Through the American Heart Walk, Arkansas is educated on the risk factors of the cardiovascular diseases and what measures of prevention can be taken. Participants include individuals, families and corporate teams that raise donations for walking the route and are eligible to earn prizes based on the amount of donations collected. Special awards are given to participants and company teams in recognition of outstanding fundraising efforts. If you are interested in participating you should not miss the kick-off event on March 3, 2006. You may also contact one of the following individuals in the New Donaghey Plaza South Building.

Ruby Shackelford	DYS	683-2674	(5 th floor)
Chawnte Booker	DMS	683-0941	(4 th floor)
Marilyn Credit	DCO	371-1400	(3 rd floor)
DeLora Butler	DOV	682-8986	(2 nd floor)
Barbara Barrows	DCCECE	682-2314	(1 st floor)

DESIGN THE 2006 DHHS HEART WALK T-SHIRT

Anyone interested in participating in designing the 2006 DHHS Heart Walk T-Shirt contest must be current employees of the



Department of Health & Human Services. Rules and regulations are available by calling or e-mailing Ruby Shackleford with the Division of Youth Services. Deadline for all entries is noon on March 17, 2006. You may reach Ruby by calling 501-683-2674 or e-mailing ruby.shackleford@arkansas.gov. If you would like to sign up and participate in the Central Arkansas Heart Walk on April 22, 2006 in North Little Rock, please attend the Kick-Off Brown Bag Program on March 3, 2006 in Conference Rooms A & B, DPS.



During the months of November, December and January, the Central Office of the Department of Health and Human Services conducted a collection drive for used eyeglasses in the lobby area of the New Donaghey South Building. A total of 157 pairs of glasses were collected.

This drive is part of Lions Club International's effort to collect and redistribute used eyeglasses to persons in underdeveloped countries. Last fiscal year, Lions Club International collected more than 5 million pairs of glasses and redistributed 3 million pairs to needy recipients around the world. The Lions Club has 13 collection and distribution centers around the world, seven in the United States. At each center, used glasses are cleaned, tested for prescription strength and sorted by volunteers for redistribution to needy persons in other countries. These glasses often enable the recipient to maintain his livelihood by restoring vision. Special thanks to **Leah Sears, Doris Edwards, Shalonda Beene, Ruby Shackleford and Coral Virden** for helping make this project a success.



DHHS Around The State

RECEIVES SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Charles Jackson, Employee Relations Awards Committee Co-Chairman at Southeast Arkansas Human Development Center, presented the Special Achievement Award for October 2005 through December 2005 to **Terry Hopson, Secretary I**, and **April Kellum, LPN**. This award recognizes an employee for a



single outstanding achievement such as a special event/special project that is related to the job and if it had an impact on the Center, the clients or the staff. The ERC Awards Committee agreed that two Special Achievement awards should be given since both of these ladies are well deserving of this award. Mrs. Hopson's special projects included volunteering to sew curtains for 11 Center Circle, as well as making alterations to many of the individuals' clothing items. Ms. Kellum's special project included assisting in designing and building the SEAHDC Christmas float, as well as assisting the individuals who rode on the float in the Christmas parade. She voluntarily

worked on this project and did not receive any compensatory time. With her help, the Center won 1st place at the Warren Christmas parade.

Meet this Month's Featured Foster Child



Meet Justice

Justice is a handsome young man. Justice is a very bright and hardworking young man. He has the ability to do very well in the school setting. He is very eager to please. Justice works well with clear rules and consequences. He works well with receiving positive attention. He is used to a structured environment, where he has learned that he has to earn privileges, and can also lose privileges. Justice needs consistency in the areas of privileges and consequences. Justice enjoys swimming, fishing, playing on computers, and video games. Justice is looking for permanence in his life. He longs to feel as though he belongs somewhere and to someone. Justice wants to be able to call someone his mom and/or dad, and to feel loved. Justice will need lots of love and attention.

A two-parent family is preferred for Justice. Staff may consider other placement options based upon the child's needs. Parents must be very nurturing, patient, attentive, resourceful, active, organized, and committed.

Quote for the day....

Joy is not in things, it is in us. – Richard Wagner



Do you have news you would like to share?

E-mail Julie.Munsell@arkansas.gov or Ingrid.Green@arkansas.gov.